

Board of Trustees
Suffolk County Department of Parks
Recreation and Conservation
Minutes of September 22, 2005 at Meadowedge, West Sayville

**BOARD
MEMBERS
PRESENT:**

Alexander McKay	Chairman, Town of Huntington
Lisa Keys	Member of the Board
Ray Corwin	Vice Chairman, Member at Large
John Fritz	Trustee, Town of Babylon
Joseph Miller	Trustee, Town of Islip
Aurelio Colina	Trustee, Town of Southampton
Richard F. White, Jr.	Trustee, Town of East Hampton
Gary Olsen	Trustee, Town of Brookhaven
Gil Cardillo	Trustee, Town of Riverhead
Miles Borden	Trustee, Town of Smithtown

ABSENT:

Todd Stebbins	Member of the Board
Thomas J. McCaffery	Trustee, Town of Southold
Christopher C. Drake	Trustee, Town of Shelter Island

**PARKS
DEPARTMENT:**

Ronald F. Foley	Commissioner
Tracey Belone	Deputy Commissioner
Colleen Hofmeister	Contracts Manager
Tom Hroncich	Intergovernmental Relations Coordinator
Bill Sickles	Sr. Superintendent of Parks
Mary Simonsen	Secretary to the Commissioner

GUESTS:

Matthew Kruger	Former Parks Trustee
Thomas Isles	Director of Planning
Lauretta Fischer	Principal Planner
Jennifer Kohn	Assistant County Attorney
Jeanine Dillon	County Executive's Office

PUBLIC SPEAKING PORTION :

There were no members of the public present for this meeting.

ADOPTION OF THE AUGUST 18, 2005 MINUTES:

Page 4 – First Paragraph under Corey Creek, second sentence, strike “aren’t all green open spaces” to read “aren’t wetlands protected...”

1. Page 4 – Under the Cory Creek Acquisition. In the second to last sentence, change “that they wanted to use...” to read “...that the County wanted to use...”
2. Page 4 – Second paragraph, fourth sentence. Change “they will move” to read “the DEC will move”.
3. Page 6 – Last full sentence leading into page 7, change it to read “He asked if they were required to protect the pond.”
4. Page 14 – First paragraph under Chairman’s Report. In the third sentence, change “Huntington” to “South Huntington.”

With no further changes Trustee Colina motioned to accept the minutes as amended, it was seconded by Trustee Miller and voted in favor to accept by a vote of 10-0-0.

PLANNING AND REAL ESTATE:

Ms. Fischer and Mr. Isles had two acquisitions to present:

1. **Westmoreland Conservation Easement**, located on Shelter Island that would be a 50/50 partnership between the Town of Shelter Island and the County. The entire parcel is a combination of farmland and open space, today they are proposing the area indicated as open space as an Open Space Conservation Easement of 30 acres. The County does not have many holdings in Shelter Island and has been trying to increase their holdings there over the past two years. Based on studies by the County Department of Health, there is concern in this area for the quality and quantity of groundwater, as such, Mr. Isles said they felt it is important to reduce development in coastal and wetland areas where possible. This would be a joint acquisition between the County and Town of Shelter Island, joint in the sense that it is two separate programs, the Multifaceted Land Preservation Partnership for Conservation Easement for the 30 acres and Purchase of Development Rights for the farmland which has already been recommended by the County Executive’s Office.

Trustee Colina asked if there was anything contiguous, or nearly contiguous in this area. Mr. Isles replied he didn’t think there was, but they were trying to have an increased presence in Shelter Island with other parcels, but not in the immediate vicinity of this parcel, such as the Third Creek Woods acquisition which is located in a different area of Shelter Island and is moving forward.

Trustee Miller asked if the farmland acquisition was just for development rights and, if on this whole parcel the County is not getting fee title to it, are they just buying development rights and an easement. Mr. Isles said that was correct except that there is not currently an existing easement at this time. So there is a right of development of the entire property, but the farmland portion was going to be a purchase of development rights and the balance of the property would be a conservation easement. Trustee Miller asked why the County would buy an

easement; Mr. Isles said that's a Legislative policy question and said while it is preferable to do full fee acquisitions, in this case that was not an option on the part of the owner. The County program allows purchases of lesser interest and the benefits are the protection of the property, the reduction of future impacts on the aquifer and there is not an obligation of maintenance or management. The down side is that the public does not get to use the property. He said he felt that conservation easement is the best option if the resource is that important and if it is the only option available. Trustee Miller asked, the owner still pays vacant property taxes, so their incentive is to pay taxes on vacant land, but the County has to ask permission to go onto the land? Mr. Isles said they have a residence on this property, which is not part of the easement, so in terms of why they would not sell it to us as a full fee acquisition as opposed to conservation easement, the owner may make the choice to maintain a higher level of privacy.

Trustee Miller asked who owned the residence. Mr. Isles said he believed it is a family arrangement or family corporation. He said the Trustees are required to act on this because it falls under the Multifaceted Land Preservation Partnership, as such, the Trustees play a mandatory advisory role. Secondly, the Parks Trustees potentially have a role in deciding if the County should purchase conservation easements.

Trustee Colina asked if there was a time limit on this easement and if development rights get banked. Mr. Isles replied that it was perpetuity; the easement does not expire after a certain period of time and the development rights do not get banked. Trustee Colina then asked if the owner could break the contract some time in the future, Ms. Kohn replied that no, it's recorded and it may pertain to an article of the of the Environmental Law and is permanent. Chairman McKay asked if there were guidelines as to what percentage of the full value of the property an easement is worth. Mr. Isles said it varies and is done case by case. Ms. Kohn asked if the owner would allow any public access, Mr. Isles said he doesn't believe the owner will allow public access, only County access. Ms. Kohn also said the easement isn't subject to the same type of defenses that a regular easement between two private parties would be because it is set up and zoned according to statute.

Trustee Corwin asked to have the statute explained. Ms. Kohn said conservation easements are set up pursuant to the Environmental Conservation Law and there is a section in there that says they are not subject to the same attacks that a regular easement between two private parties would be. She said there could be an easement between two private parties for conservation purposes, under the Environmental Conservation Law but wasn't sure if a private party could hold and enforce that easement, it would probably have to be a governmental entity or a not for profit.

With no further questions Chairman McKay asked if there was a motion to approve the acquisition. Trustee White made the motion which was seconded by Trustee Fritz. Trustee Miller said he was opposed to the acquisition because he would like to know who the principals are. He said the private owners get the benefit of an easement and it's paid for by the County and the public has no access. He said as a steward for the County residents he felt he would like a little more information. The acquisition was approved by a vote of 9-1-0.

Chairman McKay took a moment to welcome to the Board Miles Borden, the new Trustee from Smithtown, as well as Gil Cardillo, new Trustee from Riverhead who

was a guest at previous meetings. The Chairman offered his assistance in anything they may need. He also asked and they confirmed that they had taken their Oaths of Office.

2. The second acquisition presented was **Champlin Creek, Dileo Property**, in the Town of Islip, along the Southern State Parkway, Heckscher spur. The parcel is 0.9 of an acre and was proposed to be acquired under the old 12-5-E Program and was on the County Executive's Master List last year. To the south of this parcel are extensive public holdings along the Champlin Creek corridor by the County as well as the Town of Islip. Part of the property is wetlands and a small part is upland portion. This acquisition is intended to continue piecing together small acquisitions for the protection of the stream corridor. In this case, it is mandatory for the Trustees to approve.

Trustee Miller asked if this was like the Overton Preserve acquisition in which several other small parcels were up for acquisition down the line. Mr. Isles replied that there are additional parcels they hope to acquire but the difference here is that the County already owns some of the parcels. Trustee Miller asked, according to the guidelines, how many points would this acquisition get? Ms. Fischer said that at least it would be given at least 30 because of the fact that it has wetlands adjacent to other open spaces in a corridor that they are trying to protect. Mr. Isles said that this is what we are going to see a lot of in the future: smaller acquisitions in order to put pieces together to create larger parcels as there are fewer and fewer large parcels available for acquisition.

Trustee Fritz said this sounds like the South Shore Estuary Plan to protect the corridor and asked if the State is helping in any way to pick up the small pieces. Ms. Fischer said to her knowledge, the State had not made any acquisitions in this corridor recently.

Chairman McKay asked if this was a state mapped wetland, Ms. Fischer said that it is.

Trustee Miller proposed a motion to acquire the Dileo Property; it was seconded by Trustee Colina and approved by a vote of 10-0-0.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT:

Commissioner Foley began his report by talking about a **New Reservation/Point of Sale System** the Parks Department has been working on. The County Legislature and County Executive approved \$800,000 for Parks to purchase a new system and take care of the infrastructure improvements necessary to get it in place. He said Deputy Commissioner Bellone has been working ceaselessly to get it in place and handed this topic over to her for discussion. The Deputy Commissioner said an RFP went out in September with responses due back October 13th. It will then go to an RFP evaluation committee and hopefully the RFP will be awarded the following week. Parks has already received approval from the Computer Steering Committee to purchase the equipment needed to start networking the facilities, beginning within the next two weeks. Earlier this year they had already purchased the computer terminals, and once the network configuration is in place they can start installing computers. Once the RFP is awarded, they hope to begin training in November or December and be ready to go in January. They were able to get the database of current customers that can be put into this new system so they don't have to go through the process of creating their own database. The new system will take pictures of the customers for the green keys and in the next phase they will be looking into the possibility of being able to pay for them with debit cards to lessen the amount of cash changing hands. The Deputy Commissioner also said they may work with Nassau County to have green keys be interchangeable between the Counties, with visitor rates still in effect.

The next item on the Commissioner's agenda was the topic of **Parkland Use**. He said the issue has been prompted by inquiries and proposals for use of existing parklands. In addition to those mentioned by Deputy Commissioner Bellone at the previous meeting, he said there have been requests for a rowing club expansion for West Neck Farms/Coindre Hall Boathouse, a desire to expand or relocate a dog run at West Hills County Park, a Skateboard Park at Smith Point, we have a contract with East Hampton Little League for use of a field at Cedar Point and inquiries for hunting dog kennels at Sears Bellows, Newfoundland rescue practice at Lake Ronkonkoma, and off-leash Beagle Club training in preserved areas out east.

The Commissioner said there have been some successful initiatives like this such as Mastic Sports using an area behind the Police Jail in Yaphank for soccer fields. In Van Bourgdien Park there is extensive soccer field development, and the Three Village Boys and Girls Club proposal for fields in Setauket. He said these were successful in part because they were not proposed in existing parks that already had a use-pattern established. He said when proposers go into a County Park, they see what they see at that moment on that day. In their opinion it looks like an under-used, undeveloped area that they think "why can't we use it?" What they miss in that quick evaluation is that at other times of the year there are people using those areas, and that restrictions may already be on the land, such as Nature Preserve Status, Historic Landmark Status, grassland restoration areas, etc., which would only be discovered after research.

He said Legislators O'Leary and Losquadro are very interested in the Longwood Soccer proposal for Cathedral Pines and they want the Trustees to know that. He said we need to talk about how we're going to evaluate these proposals. Some proposals were turned away outright. On the Longwood Soccer proposal, the Commissioner said that before he knew what he knows now, the plan was to internally evaluate their proposal and send them a letter saying there are five or six things out of ten things that they are proposing that just aren't going to happen and try to grow it toward a good proposal to bring before the Trustees for evaluation, rather than bring in a proposal that is not well constructed which may have a lot of things that can't happen. The Commissioner said he would like to continue the discussion because these items are subject to Trustee review and approval when they're proposing to change park usage or go into environmentally sensitive areas.

Chairman McKay said, in going back over the minutes from the meeting last month, there was something he found disturbing and thought it was a policy matter that the Trustees need to support the Commissioner on. On page nine of the minutes, second paragraph where it read "As stated in the letter they (Longwood Youth Assoc.) have requested quite extensive modifications, but have agreed to allow the soccer fields to be used for camping and other activities." He said at the very least, Parks Administration are the ones who decide who is to use our facilities and for what purposes. No group should have any veto power over what our parks are used for, or demand any exclusive rights. The Commissioner said the wording may not truly reflect how that occurred. He said they told them the only way this would happen is if all of the activities that have always taken place there would continue to happen and they agreed. However he said, there's a fear that it could turn into the "get their foot in the door theory" that when they get in there and get it developed and then the other uses occur, they'll say "this is damaging our investment and you can't allow those things to happen anymore". But for the opening set of negotiations such as they were, it was clear cut that if they are going to develop their fields there, they are going to have to suffer these other uses and any effects that come along with them.

Trustee Fritz said there's also the environmental issue and what they're going to do there. If they are going to put in fields they are going to have to put down herbicide, fertilizer etc. Commissioner Foley said, Parks has told them what the County rules are on how we manage and maintain our properties to minimize chemical use and they have agreed to comply with that.

Trustee Fritz said at the last meeting he asked if the campers were OK with this and that he looked into it himself. He said he doesn't think the campers realize what's going on and asked that before the final proposal is approved, that the regular campers at Cathedral Pines should be notified of the changes to be made to the camping area so that they could put their two cents in before the deal is done. He thought that they should have priority because of all of the years they have been using the area. The Commissioner said what they have to decide is, does the fact that some group or some sport has had the right of use of a particular area give them priority? Does their use or activity have more, less or equal priority over new proposed ones? He said we are the Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation, so is recreation more or less important than conservation and parks, and how does one figure that out?

Trustee Fritz asked if they lost camping at Cathedral Pines to any extent, would they consider putting in campgrounds behind the dune line at Shagmoor. The Commissioner wanted to make clear that they wouldn't be losing any camping at Cathedral Pines. The area is a large open field on the far end of all of the fields that's used two or three times a year when they have large camping events, such as in the spring to kick off the camping season and in the fall the boy scouts use it as an activity field, throughout the year there are dog shows and other things. But they're not proposing to remove any campsites to accommodate this activity.

The Commissioner said the only impact is the changing of the rustic, bucolic nature of the park as there would be more traffic, noise and activity that are not there now. That's the real change as far as the impact on the park, we have to look at what that park was intended to be, what do we want it to be, additionally, it's in the core of the Pine Barrens and we have to look at what our obligations are in that regard.

Trustee Miller asked if the kids playing soccer will all have green keys. The Commissioner said that's not been worked out yet. Trustee Miller then said, we could then have travel clubs from all over Long Island coming using County Parks, like the after-school golfing situation with kids who are unaccounted for whose parents may not have green keys. The Commissioner said they hadn't gotten that far yet, but it's a possibility.

Trustee White said that in the process of thinking about where we go from here, we have to ask if we are taking away any privileges by adding new activities. Commissioner Foley replied that theoretically, while we would not be taking away any campsites, it may change the surrounding areas of the campsites. He said if you choose to look globally on the question, something is being taken away from the sports clubs in many areas. School districts are expanding their buildings and limiting the space available for fields. There is a real demand arising created by some kind of change that is less welcoming to these sports and added that he doesn't know if it should be the County's obligation to deal with that change.

Trustee Corwin said, in regards to increased pressure for field-sports space, about ten years ago or so they were worried about the demand for golf courses replacing trees, etc., and that pressure has eased, as times change and demands change. As a body, he said the Trustees should be able to develop policies for Parks in general for such current issues based on a study that was done by the Planning Department for the Parks Master Plan a few years ago so they might have an objective basis on the carrying capacity and sustainability of the parks. He said his fear was that at some point, as some parks around the country have done, they would have to turn to Planning to develop a park zoning document, but if they had to do that, it would be one approach.

The Commissioner said when he spoke before the Legislative Parks Committee the previous day, he strongly urged that a real solution to these pressures and demands for new and different

things in Parks may be in how we acquire new property. When he thought about the pressure for soccer fields, his mind goes to former duck farms that were not being used. The land is already disturbed, there are no trees, and in many cases, all that would need to be done is to get rid of a few derelict buildings. There may be some with historic interest, but most of them aren't, and you've automatically got a wide open space that somebody can go in and take care of and do it without burdening the Parks department with the maintenance obligations. But, he said, that goes against the current trend, which is that most of the land now acquired by the County is somehow in a preservation category, which precludes these kinds of uses and he said he thinks that there are parcels around that would be suitable for such changes.

In regards to the Pine Barrens, Trustee Corwin said the Governor just signed a law that removes the ability of all levels of government agencies, excluding the Federal Government, from getting one of the types of permits one would need to proceed on such a project in the Pine Barrens. The Extraordinary Hardship Permit is no longer available, only a Public Need Permit, and one of the criteria in getting that permit is proof that there is no other location in the County of Suffolk that can be used for your purpose.

Trustee Corwin said the Pines Barrens has a lot of exemptions, but brand new activities that require alterations of grade or vegetation that were not previously there are probably going to have a lot of problems getting approval. The Commissioner said regardless of the policy study that's been done, if a majority of Legislators direct us to do something, we are going to do it. That's what happened with the dog run at Blydenburgh which is a park that already has a Master Plan with virtually every inch of Blydenburgh Park dedicated to something. It's going to be a tough thing to do.

Chairman McKay said it seems that the towns are being let off the hook for meeting their own needs. In the Town of Huntington, he said they've used money from Greenways to buy 20 acres for soccer fields, through the development process they received a 10% dedication of 30 acres for soccer fields in Melville, the Town had established its own dog park until the neighbors said they didn't want it. He said towns shouldn't have it too easy to not meet their own recreational needs, there is still money in the Greenways Program to acquire open space for fields.

Trustee Borden said there are school fields that are underutilized or not used in the summer and maybe that is an area they could look at that. Ms. Fischer said there are liability issues and restrictions on after-hour use which may prevent those from being feasible options. To change the laws to remove liability would take a Legislative change, and that would be a school district issue. Commissioner Foley said requests have come from independent groups or corporations in some form, made up of parents and volunteers. No school districts have come to him with requests.

Trustee Cardillo said Riverhead has issues with soccer growing every year, but in trying to look at both sides, taxpayers may not be concerned about the purchase of open space, but if they got the sense that "this is my tax dollars at work" and they see that they are using a County Park for their children to play sports, they may be more amenable to more money going to the purchasing of such lands. The Commissioner said there are two sides to that as well, if they think there is a five acre acquisition in their neighborhood for preservation, they usually don't have a problem with it. But if they think it is going to be a five acre acquisition for an active park, they might come out of the woodwork saying "Not in my backyard."

Chairman McKay said a majority of the proposals have come in recently, in the last two to three years, and most of these have become localized. County Parks are regional facilities, he said the Towns have a responsibility and he doesn't think they are meeting or even trying to meet those needs. He said Brookhaven had a \$50 million bond issue and seems they could have invested

some of that money not just in environmental lands but into recreational lands, another town had a \$10 million bond issue, Huntington had a \$30 million dollar bond issue. And the thing is, we (Parks) serve regional needs, things like camping, golf courses, larger facilities for which there isn't space that the towns could provide for, but he thinks most towns could find ten acres for a soccer field.

Ms. Fischer said historically, from a regional perspective, we (Parks and the County) is where you see most larger acquisitions for parkland, passive recreation, golf courses, beaches, larger regional use of property. We are now being asked to take local uses into regional parks, and that's the policy issue that is being presented at this point. The Commissioner commented that recent proposals are growing in number and diversity as the population is becoming more dense and diverse. As land becomes more valuable it becomes more difficult for even a local government to get, they are going to look at what they can get, and that means County Parks are going to be looked at, and he said he thought they would be getting more of these inquiries rather than less.

Trustee White suggested the concept of asking these organizations to go back to their local governmental jurisdictions and ask the Town or Village to deal directly with us. In other words they would be dealing with a license agreement with the Town, and that way all of the requests regarding the use of a field after they are given the use of it would be directed to the town and not to Parks. And the liability would be shifted to a political jurisdiction. For example, the GATR Site is going to be an agreement between the County and the Montauk Fire District. In Montauk they have a field that is in a State Park right of way and that field can be used for soccer, craft fairs, football, etc., but that is an agreement between the State and Town of East Hampton. So anyone wanting to use the field has to go through the town recreation department, not to the Superintendent of State Parks. Responsibility was shifted from the State to the Town, it's a State facility but it is not used state-wide. The GATR site is a County facility but the use is going to be for the Village of Montauk only. In our case, every time an organization wants to have a license or agreement to do something, Parks is in the middle of it as opposed to shifting that over to a school district, Village or Town and letting them handle it.

Chairman McKay said he liked that idea because it makes the Town a partner. Trustee Colina said it might also lead to better utilization of resources by the local governing bodies and force a better all around package for everybody. Chairman McKay said perhaps the Trustees should take another month to think about the issue because they're not done with it.

Commissioner Foley said he has drafted up a letter back to the association making the proposal for soccer fields which he hasn't sent yet. He asked the Trustees if they wanted them there to give a formal presentation, or did they want to discourage it more actively than he has. He said even if we took an idea like Trustee White's, you have to get that enacted into law which means dealing with Legislators. Because Legislators are "regional" people, and duly elected, they have influence and weight when they come in with a proposal. Trustee Corwin asked if we could start working on something sooner than later. The Commissioner said he could draft something for the Trustees to review at the next meeting.

Park Police Staffing: Commissioner Foley said the Trustees have a long history of being concerned with the staffing levels of the Suffolk County Park Police and said there are currently only two vacancies due to the strong efforts by the County Executive, who just approved hiring seven new Park Police Officers. Half of the recruits will have to go through the academy and half were already New York City Police Officers who will not have to go through training. Staffing is up to almost record levels, the total number of Park Police Officer positions is 42.

Trustee White asked how retention of the officer's was, because what was happening in the past

was people were being hired by Parks because the other law enforcement lists were closed, but they got on to lists in Towns and the County when they opened. The Commissioner said that is still a problem, less so with those that come from the NYPD because they have made a conscious decision that they want a change of environment and they seem to stay. With the new recruits, you can't tell whether this is a stepping stone for them or if they are really interested in staying in Parks. The retention of the new recruits has not been good. The Towns and County Police Departments pay more, it is easier to get to the top pay grade and they have better benefits. But he added that we will continue to hire as many as we are permitted.

Trustee White said a couple of years ago there was a committee that researched this issue and thought there was an agreement with the County Executive's Office or the Legislature to improve some of those conditions. Trustee Corwin said under the administrative abilities of the County Executive's Office at the time, vacant positions were filled and they tried to reduce the number of steps required for advancement but they were bound by the contract terms, which were set because they were part of the general Municipal Union, not their own bargaining unit. The Commissioner said essentially that is the case, the Park Police are a small part of AME. However, the Park Police have petitioned to become decertified from that Union and become part of another union. It's going through the hearing process right now and if it goes through they would become part of the Sheriff's Union. But that doesn't necessarily mean they would get the same benefits that the Sheriff's Department does now.

Commissioner Foley also said in the area of Park Police, they promoted Gary Henke to the position of Captain from Lieutenant, Scott Gray to Lieutenant from Sergeant, and Tom Schirillo to Sergeant from Police Officer. This rounded out the Supervisory level to give more opportunity to bring more people into the entry level positions.

Chairman McKay asked if there were any other issues the Trustees would like to bring to the Commissioner's attention.

Trustee Miller asked Trustee White and/or the Commissioner if Acting Trustee Brian Herrington of the County Executive's Office had gotten them an update on the **GATR** site as he had promised at the last meeting. Trustee White said he heard back from him the very next day and it was discovered that some of the necessary documents the Commissioner had requested hadn't been provided that was causing the delay. Trustee White said he thought that work had been done already. He also said a lot of progress has been made because the issue of park alienation has been taken off the table, and as soon as they provide schedule C, which is the technical data, it goes from there to the CEQ (Council on Environmental Quality) where Commissioner Foley would present it and in essence become their advocate, but it would be a Montauk Fire District request, not Parks, the Commissioner would be a supporter. After the CEQ it would go to the Legislature for legislation to empower the Commissioner to enter into an agreement with the Montauk Fire District. Trustee White added he was very impressed and pleased with the speed which Acting Trustee Herrington responded and wanted to publicly thank Commissioner Foley for going out to Montauk and "blowing away a lot of smoke" between the East Hampton Town Police, Ed Mooney of Highlander Corporation, the Montauk Fire Department and the Montauk Fire District.

OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS:

Trustee Fritz asked what the status was on the **Trap and Skeet RFP**. The Commissioner said they are moving towards an agreement and the Chairman thanked Trustee Olsen for his work and involvement in the process.

Trustee Corwin wished to compliment the Commissioner, the Parks Department and everyone involved in the **Flight 800 Anniversary Memorial**. He said he thought it was wonderfully and

professionally done.

Trustee Miller said he was asked by an Islip resident about a **walking trail** that runs parallel to **West Avenue in West Sayville**, that now appears to be being used as a dumping ground and no one can walk the trail anymore. The Commissioner said he would look into it and correct it.

Resolutions 1581 and 1736: 1581 would link County Park fees for several County volunteer groups to Senior Citizen discounts and has been discussed at several of the previous meetings, and 1736 would link County Park fees for Veterans to Park Fees for Senior Citizens. He said both of these require action by the Trustees before they can be acted on by the Legislature, 1581 was tabled, 1736 is new.

Chairman McKay said that adding veterans complicates things more, it benefits the veterans but it puts a burden on other people. He asked for the Trustees to read the resolutions over and they would be discussed and possibly acted on at the next meeting. Trustee Miller asked what the fee differential was. Commissioner Foley said the Budget Review Office and the Legislature have asked Parks for an analysis of who got what discounts last year but because of the cumbersome nature of the way those records are kept they haven't been able to respond to those questions yet and they are going to work on it as soon as they get this years revenue reconciled.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Chairman McKay referenced the letters he had written to the South Huntington School Board and the New York State Commissioner of Education indicating concern about the proposal **by the South Huntington School District** to build a bus storage and service facility next to the **Froehlich Farm Nature Preserve**. He said he had received a response from the State Department of Education but not from the school district as of yet. He said the letter from the Education Department said the district is still considering its options in the matter and has not requested approval from the department to purchase the land. He said he thought the school district may be having second thoughts, which could make the property available, as it was initially proposed for purchase by the County and the Town of Huntington under Greenways Recreation to provide additional soccer fields in the Town of Huntington.

Vote for a New Vice Chairman of the Board: Chairman McKay stated Vice Chairman Kruger was resigning from the Board of Trustees and opened up nominations to elect someone to serve as Vice Chairman. At this time Trustee Fritz moved to nominate Trustee Corwin as Vice Chairman. It was seconded by Trustee Miller and voted 10-0-0 in favor by all the Trustees.

DATE AND LOCATION OF NEXT MEETING:

October 20th meeting location: It was decided that the next meeting of the Board of Trustees would be held at Cathedral Pines.

At this time, Chairman McKay stated that **Trustee Matthew Kruger** was retiring from the Long Island State Park Commission and has graciously resigned his position as Parks Trustee. He said it has been a pleasure to serve with him on the Board of Trustees for the last 19 years and thanked him for his endless contributions, most notably his connection with the Air National Guard in helping remove trash from many of our sites, as well as his service as Vice Chairman and for several years as Chairman, will all be greatly missed. The Chairman read a signed Proclamation from County Executive Steve Levy for Mr. Kruger's dedication and service and presented it to him.

Commissioner Foley wished to add that the one and half-plus years he has served as Parks

Commissioner with Mr. Kruger have been very important. He said he is possibly more familiar with Mr. Kruger's work with State Parks, and that and his work with both the Trustees and State Parks exemplify his true love of the park business, in getting people out and learning about their environment which is very valuable to the people of Suffolk County. With that, the Commissioner presented Mr. Kruger with a certificate of appreciation on behalf of the Board of Trustees and thanked him for his service.

Mr. Kruger said he was overwhelmed and that it was the fastest 19 years that he could recall. He said he looks back on all the "mischief" they had gotten into, and the times where they have been able to make a difference. He said he was proud to have served on a board where, as he has said to newspaper reporters, politicians and neighbors alike, that although the individuals on this board are born of political appointment, once they come to serve on the board, it's a group that is probably the least political, most energetic, most concerned about the people of the community and the County that he has ever seen, let alone served with. He said he wanted to thank everyone there, and in some way those who preceded, for all the work that's been done in making a difference in our county. Mr. Kruger concluded by saying our parks are so important and so precious to us and it was his honor to serve on the Board.

Chairman McKay announced the meeting adjourned.